

November 16, 2005

TO: Chief School Administrators/Contractors

FROM: Penelope E. Lattimer, Ph.D.  
Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Administrative Fee for Criminal History Background Checks

**IMPORTANT UPDATE INFORMATION CONCERNING CRIMINAL HISTORY FINGERPRINTING PROCEDURES – PLEASE INFORM STAFF PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCESSING THE BACKGROUND CHECKS OF THE UPDATED CHANGES TO THE PROCEDURES.**

**Administrative Fee – Criminal History Background Checks**

The Department of Education, Criminal History Review Unit has a statutory responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the students of this State. Since the inception of the program on October 8, 1986, the department has not charged a fee to public schools for processing the criminal history background checks. State statute 18A:6-7.2a. Authority of Commissioner, allows the Commissioner of Education to “adjust the fees set by the department for the criminal history background checks.” Further, the statute is clear that the applicant shall pay the fee, including the cost of administering and processing the background checks.

Effective December 1, 2005, all requests for a criminal history background check, mandated pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A-6-7.1 et seq., N.J.S.A.39-17 et seq., or N.J.S.A.18A: 6-4.13 et seq., will require a \$7.00 administrative fee. Nonpublic schools that were required to pay a \$6.00 fee will now pay \$7.00 to process their final candidates for employment. Approval letters will not be issued without payment of the administrative fee.

The employing educational facilities or authorized school bus contractors will submit the non-refundable \$7.00 administrative fee to the Department of Education, Criminal History Review Unit in the form of a money order, certified check or district/contractor business check, payable to the “State of New Jersey.” Payment must accompany the Applicant Authorization and Certification (AA & C), Roster and Transmittal forms sent to this office, attesting that no disqualifying information exists on their criminal history record and authorizing the department to conduct the background checks. This process is for initial and archive background check requests. The payment and scheduling appointments through the private vendor, Sagem Morpho, has not changed. Applicants will continue to pay the current fee of \$78.00 to Sagem Morpho.

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### **Electronic Processing of Applicant Information**

Effective November 7, 2005, the technical enhancement to the Criminal History Review Unit database became operational. Sharp Decisions has completed programming our system to have the database created electronically from NJ State Police or Federal Bureau of Investigation responses. Upon initial application for employment, applicants or the school district/authorized school bus contractor will schedule an appointment with the private vendor, Sagem Morpho, to have the fingerprint image LiveScan. Those individuals that are transferring school districts or renewing bus driver's licenses will be eligible for the archive process providing they meet the archive process requirements. The fingerprint images will be searched by the NJ State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The NJ State Police will respond as to a "no record" or "record" for the individual applicant/employee. This information will create our database.

This informative process will be sent electronically from NJ State Police directly into our mainframe and will be finalized within a 24 hour timeframe. Approval letters will be generated twice a week and sent to the applicant within a 10 day period. Further, there will be an electronic bimonthly process for reconciling the applicants that are missing state or federal returns to ensure prompt responses to educational facilities and bus contractors.

It is essential that the educational facilities and school bus contractors submit the required forms and payment immediately to the Criminal History Review Unit to ensure a rapid response to your requests for background checks.

For questions concerning the new process, please contact the Criminal History Review Unit between the hours of 8:15 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday at 609-292-0507.

PEL/RM/cc:chief.school.adm.fee.chance

c: Members, State Board of Education

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